

House Republican Press Release

November 30, 2005
Press Office: 860-240-8700

REP. CAFERO CHARGES NEW CAMPAIGN FINANCE SYSTEM 'RIPE' FOR ABUSE



HARTFORD - House Deputy Republican Leader state Rep. Lawrence F. Cafero Jr. today said the Democratic endorsed campaign finance plan debated in the legislature today contained loopholes that favor Democratic incumbents and will cost taxpayers millions to finance campaigns that they don't support.

The overhaul of the current system makes it more difficult for average citizens to take part in the political process and provides further protections for the Majority Democratic leadership. Taxpayers will be forced to foot the bill for campaigns that they oppose politically, Cafero said.

"The plan drawn up behind closed doors by the Democrats favors the Democrats. This is no real reform, it's a charade. To think that this will get special interest money out of the system is a fantasy," said the Norwalk lawmaker. "Real reform would be to make the proposed restrictions effective immediately and apply them to the legislature."

He added, "As the ink dries on this bill we will begin to see just how special interest will be able to game the new reforms."

The campaign finance bill will cost taxpayers at least \$17 million annually but could be three times that amount. Every lawmaker would be allowed to keep a political action committee account, or PAC, while at the same time receive taxpayer money once the candidate attains very modest campaign donation levels.

Gubernatorial candidates would be eligible for up to \$3 million in an election cycle once they raise \$250,000. State senate candidates would receive \$80,000 after raising \$15,000 and House candidates \$25,000 after raising \$5,000. However, additional taxpayer money is available for primary races.

The bill makes it virtually impossible for third party candidates to access public finances because they would have to get at least 20 percent of the vote.

The bill bans lobbyist and state contractor donations directly to candidates and prevents corporations from contributing through ad book donations.

Cafero said that those who want to will be able to get around these restrictions and said that clearly portions of the measure are unconstitutional and will be challenged in court. “The government will control the flow of money and information and we’re already seeing that this bill will regulate political and free speech.” Cafero said.